

Food Recall

Summary:

The routine collaboration of state agencies and local public health agencies protects Missourians from illness and costly medical expenses on a daily basis. A local public health agency's investigation of the source of an illness triggered an investigation by the Missouri Department of Agriculture, product testing by the state Public Health Lab, and identification of food product distribution by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Local public health agencies (LPHAs) in the affected areas followed up with retail food establishments to verify that the recalled product had been removed from sale thus limiting the possibility of illness for citizens. Nationwide in the first nine months of 2013, there were 401 food recalls of which 73 required follow-up in Missouri with five requiring immediate follow-up.

Detailed Story:

In January 2013, a Local Public Health Agency (LPHA) in the Northwest District was contacted about a case of illness connected by laboratory testing to shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* bacteria. The illness was reported to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) as required. The investigation found that the ill person had consumed an artisan cheese that was produced with unpasteurized milk as an ingredient. The implicated product was reported to the Missouri Department of Agriculture's Milk Board since the dairy that produced the cheese was under its inspection authority. The dairy was visited by the Milk Board and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and was asked to cease production; the cheese on hand was impounded. Samples of the cheese were tested for shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* bacteria by the State Public Health Laboratory. The State Milk Board requested that the dairy recall the implicated cheese. The Milk Board worked with DHSS' Bureau of Environmental Health Services (BEHS) to locate and disseminate distribution information on the cheese. The LPHAs in Clay County, Grundy County, and Johnson County were informed about the retail locations in their jurisdictions that received the recalled product so they could ensure the cheese had been removed from sale. The LPHAs reported back to BEHS that the product was not on the shelves of the stores in their jurisdiction that were reported to have received it. Due to the quick response from all agencies involved, the number of cases was limited to three. The dairy resumed production after working with the Milk Board to pass inspection, which included clearance testing done by the State Public Health Laboratory.